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Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE)



NEAR EAST FOUNDATION

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FINAL REPORT

Near East Foundation

MALI: Rue 321, Porte 75, BP93, Sevare Millionkin
Region de Mopti, Mali (+223) 21.42.16.78

NEW YORK: 230 Euclid Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210 · (315) 428-8670

www.neareast.org

**Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali
(RECAPE)
[USAID/OFDA-NEF]**

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This publication was produced for the review of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was produced under the Restoring the Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali Project, implemented by the Near East Foundation.

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the Near East Foundation, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Cover Photo: Rehabilitated and planted rice plain (30 ha) in Mougui, Commune of Koubewel, Cercle of Douentza.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ha	Hectare
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NEF	Near East Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OFDA	Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
RECAPE	Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project supported populations in northern Mali to revive and revitalize the economic and production systems affected by the 2012 conflict. The project rebuilt damaged hydro-agricultural infrastructure, supplied producers with necessary inputs (seeds, fertilizers and animal feed), and provided cash grants to local micro businesses to alleviate food insecurity and restore means of production. The RECAPE project was implemented from April 15, 2013 through July 15, 2014. A three-month extension allowed the project team to provide ongoing monitoring and support to beneficiaries.

The project had significant impacts in the targeted areas of northern Mali. The project provided **19,069 individuals (9,376 women)** with the tools and support they needed to rebuild their livelihoods and generate income needed to meet their families' food, education, and healthcare needs. Of note:

- **1,584 fishers** (including **804 women**) benefited from the **rehabilitation of 5 fishponds**.
- **19,600 fingerlings delivered** to 5 rehabilitated fishponds.
- 160 fishers (over half women) received and filled **vouchers for fishing kits**.
- 156 fishers (over half women) participated in **trainings to promote improved fishing techniques and management of fishponds**.
- Fishers produce estimated **106,032 of fresh fish** (~663kg/fisher) after 6 months of operation in the rehabilitated ponds and traditional fisheries.
- **101,500 animals benefited** from animal feed distribution, water point rehabilitation, and pasture regeneration activities.
- 5,698 people (2,478 women) benefited from **animal feed, water point rehabilitation, and the regeneration of 100 ha of pastures**.
- 7,800 people (4,234 women) benefited from **seed, fertilizer, and agricultural tool distribution**.
- 1,063 people (378 women) benefited from the **rehabilitation of 102 ha of rice plains** in Falembougou, Koudioum, and Mougui.



Rehabilitated rice plain in Mougui.

- **Food self-sufficiency** increased by estimated 3 months for rain-fed rice, 6.6 months for irrigated rice, 2.5 months for millet, and 10 months for women's market garden crops.
- 1,900 (1,400 women) people received **cash vouchers to restart economic activities** totaling \$190,000. Beneficiaries also received support from economic recovery agents in the planning and implementation of economic activities.
- Monitoring visits showed that **84.6%** of cash grant recipients were able to restart livelihood activities through project support.

This final report summarizes the key activities performed, accomplishments, and impact of the RECAPE project.



Women receiving vouchers for vegetable seeds in the village Tiécouraré

2. PROGRESS ACCORDING TO INDICATORS

Sub-sector	Indicators & Targets	Targets	Achieved Overall	Notes
Objective 1: To promote increased food production and emergency recovery of capacity in cereal production, fishing, market gardening, and livestock production.				
Fisheries	Number of people trained in fisheries, by sex.	160 (80 women)	156 fishers (82 women)	The project was slightly under-target due to individuals leaving trainings for health reasons and the prolonged absence of around a dozen fishing groups that were identified in the zone.
	Number of people benefiting from fisheries activities, by sex.	1600 (900 women)	1,584 people (804 women)	The project was slightly under-target due to individuals leaving trainings for health reasons and the prolonged absence of around a dozen fishing groups that were identified in the zone.
	Average number of kilograms of fish harvested per fisher in six-month, by sex.	1000 Kg per fisher	662.7 Kg per fisher	Based on discussions with fishers, the output gap is due to insufficient fish food to support the rapid and equal increase in fish production.
Livestock	Number of animals benefiting from or affected by livestock activities.	100,000	101,500 <i>43,000 cattle; 57,000 sheep and goats; 1,000 donkeys; 500 camels.</i>	Distribution of supplemental feed and rehabilitation of water points satisfied at least 60% of needs of 101,500 animals during the lean period and migration season in the areas covered by the project.
	Number of people benefiting from livestock activities, by sex.	2,428 (850 women)	5,698 people (2,478 women)	Benefited from supplemental feed distribution, restoration of water points, and regeneration of pastures.
Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security	Projected increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed systems/agricultural input for beneficiary households.	6 months	2.5 - 10 months	4 months average for grains; 10 months average for vegetable gardening
	Number of people benefiting from seed systems/agricultural input activities, by sex.	7,800 (3,980 women)	7,800 (4,234 women)	Achieved; exceeded targeted number of female participants through market gardening activities.

Irrigation	Number of hectares irrigated.	100	102 ha	Achieved
	Number of people benefiting from irrigation activities, by sex.	1,000 (500 women)	1063 people (378 women)	Achieved
	Projected increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed system/agricultural irrigation equipment activities.	6 months	3 - 6.5 months	Variable, dependent on crop; average ~5 months
Objective 2: To restore viable livelihoods for conflict-affected communities, returnees, and IDPs in support of economic recovery.				
Seed Systems and Agricultural Inputs	Number of people assisted through livelihoods restoration activities, by sex.	1,900 (1,400 women)	1900 (1,400 women)	Achieved
	Percent of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support.	80%	84.6%	Achieved
	Total USD amount channeled into the program area through sub-sector activities.	\$190,000	\$190,000	Achieved

3. BENEFICIARIES TARGETED AND REACHED

Sector 1	<i>Agriculture and Food Security</i>	
Objective:	Enable conflict-affected populations in Mali to rebuild their livelihoods and agricultural systems through support in crop production, fishing, and livestock.	
	Targeted	Reached
Number of People	11,828	17,169
Number of IDPs	2,575 (1,300 returnees and 1,275 IDPs)	7,963
Sector 2	<i>Economic Recovery and Market Systems</i>	
Objective:	Enable conflict-affected populations in Mali to rebuild their livelihoods and agricultural systems through microenterprise development.	
	Targeted	Reached
Number of People	1,900	1,900
Number of IDPs	600 (450 women)	600
CUMULATIVE TOTALS		
	Targeted	Reached
Total Number of People Targeted (Individuals):	13,728	19,069
Total Number of IDP Beneficiaries Targeted (Individuals) as subset of above:	2,575	8,563

Sector 1: The total number of beneficiaries for the agriculture sector is based on the following activities: seed distribution, animal feed distribution, and fishpond restoration. These are the most inclusive set of activities in each sub-sector, and we did not note significant overlap among beneficiaries at this level.

4. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sub-Sector 1.1: Fisheries

The RECAPE project supported the resumption of fishing activities, which represent more than half the annual income of those displaced by the crisis. Income from the sale of fishery products contributes to the purchase of grain, animals, and other goods and services for the community--contributing to the renewal of the means of production and food security.

Activity 1.1. Reconstruct at least 5 damaged fishponds.

1,428 individuals (722 women) benefited from the rehabilitation of 5 fishponds in Sobbo and Takouti (Diaptodji Commune), and Korientzé, Fanabougou and Noradji (Korombana Commune).

Based on observed physical damage, rehabilitation works carried out

on the five fishponds targeted by the project included: (1) cleaning to a depth of 1.60m; (2) strengthening of levees; (3) repair of damaged catchments; (4) repair of flood water inlet structures; (5) coating of water supply channels; (6) repair of damaged enclosures with wire mesh fences; and (7) repair of damaged pond entrance doors.

Activity 1.2 Restock at least 5 fishponds.

The RECAPE project restocked the 5 rehabilitated ponds, working with fishers to restore production to a minimum of pre-crisis levels. 3,920 fingerlings were delivered to each site – a grand total of **19,600 fingerlings** delivered to the rehabilitated ponds. The species that were preferred by and delivered to the beneficiary communities are Tilapia Zillii, Claris Gariepinus, and/or Claris Anguillaris. The ratio between Tialpia and Claris species was 3 :1.

After six months of operation, average production stands estimated through regular project monitoring is **662.7 kg** of fresh fish per fisher for a total capture of 106,032 kg.



Fish harvesting in a rehabilitated pond.



Fishing with a net in the rehabilitated pond in Fanabougou.



Carp in the process of drying in Sobbo.

The project team has provided additional support and monitoring to fishers to help increase production levels, which are lower than anticipated due to insufficient fish food.

Activity 1.3 Provide fishing equipment and training in fishing/fish processing techniques.

The project worked with the cooperative societies that manage the rehabilitated ponds to distribute material and equipment vouchers to **160 fishers (82 women)**. Beneficiaries received vouchers for fishing kits that included: 1 net, 2 traps, 2 containers for fish storage, 2 buckets, and 1 rack for drying and smoking fish.

156 fishers (82 women) also participated in training sessions that introduced improved fishing and harvesting techniques. The training was held in a participatory fashion to encourage active participation. Training sessions focused on aquaculture and management techniques, the maintenance of structures, fish species and food, the preservation and processing of fish, fishing controls, and financial management.



Fish harvesting in rehabilitated and restocked pond.

Sub-Sector 1.2: Livestock

Activity 2.1: Restore community pasture areas.

NEF rehabilitated **100 hectares** of pasture in Diaptodji (Circle of Douentza), and Korombana and Ourobe Doude communes (Circle of Mopti), benefitting **480 pastoralists (144 women)**. The restored area in each village can meet the needs of 80-200 animals for 30 to 50 days. The RECAPE project also trained managers of pastoral societies in pasture regeneration techniques, cutting, planting, and the maintenance of bourgou (*Echinocloa stagnina*).

Commune	Villages	Area (ha)	Number of Beneficiaries
Diaptodji	Samanguiraye	15	240
	Daba	15	
	Karma	10	
	Poye	10	
S/T 1		50	
Korombana	Korientzé	25	143
S/T 2		25	
Ourobé Doudé	Sindégué (Sekawol)	25	97
S/T 3		25	
TOTAL		100	480



Pasture regeneration in Sendégué/Ourobé Doudé.

Activity 2.2 Distribute Emergency Supplemental Feed

600 tons of emergency supplemental animal feed was distributed to a total of **1851 individuals (634 women)** from **10 farmers' cooperatives** to ensure the survival of their remaining animals. The distribution of supplemental feed had important impacts in the targeted area:

- Provided a food supplement for livestock in the area affected by the occupation.
- Increased the availability of food and reduced costs in the market.
- Helped various actors and structures in the livestock meat industry to recover and revitalize their work after more than a year of inactivity.

- Gave 634 women supplementary food for their livestock, without which they would have had to leave their homes and move to locations where the risk of loss, disease, theft, and conflict was increased.
- Helped traders and transporters to restart their activities.

Activity 2.3. Restoration of Water Points.

NEF rehabilitated **5 pastoral water points** used to provide water to both local and transhumant livestock during the dry season. These water points had been abandoned for months due to the deterioration of walls and capture systems, resulting from the lack of maintenance by local populations. The work carried out included:

- The complete rehabilitation of superstructures in the villages of Kerena (Kerena Commune) and Lenga (Haire Commune).
- The cleaning, securing of walls, and construction of superstructures in the villages of Pel (Koubewel Koundia Commune), Teye (Dangol Bore Commune), and Bodara (Ndiaptodji Commune),

The five rehabilitated water points meet the full-year water needs of local and transhumant livestock estimated at **101,500 head of animals**: 43,000 cattle; 57,000 sheep goats; 1000 donkeys; and 500 camels,



benefitting at least **3,367 people (1700 women)**. **Restored water points will provide water to livestock.**

Sub-Sector 1.3: Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security

Activity 3.1: Facilitate Market-Based Access to Seeds and Inputs.

Seed Distribution. Prior to distribution, the RECAPE project team tested the quality and germination rate of varieties of rice and millet offered by providers. Expert seed producers in Mopti ensured the reliability of results. Based on results from testing in different agro-ecological conditions in the project area, resistance to water stress, and nutritional qualities, the following varieties of seeds were



Rice fields in Bagui (Oct. 2013). RECAPE interventions resulted in highly successful irrigated rice production.

selected: *Toronion* variety of millet seed; *Adny 11* variety of irrigated rice seed; and *Nérika L2* variety of rain-fed rice seed.

NEF distributed vouchers for **56,600 kg** in millet seed (20kgs per individual to seed at least 2 hectares during winter season), and **12,800 kg** in irrigated (*Adny 11*) and rain-fed rice seed (*Nérika L2*) to **4,009 beneficiaries (893 women)** in 10 communes.

Based on follow up monitoring, **96.25%** of millet recipients successfully planted the seeds using optimal practices. Beneficiaries all had prior experience with rice production, and planting and fertilizing were all done using appropriate techniques. While irrigated rice fields produced strongly, a one-month drought severely compromised rice production in rain-fed fields.

NEF also distributed 250 kg of shallot and 100 kg of potato seed to each of 14 market gardens, benefitting **3,341 women**.

Fertilizer Distribution. RECAPE provided 24,000 kgs of urea and 16,000 kgs of DAP mineral fertilizers to **1,629 rice producers (326 women)** to stimulate growth in irrigated areas that benefitted from rice seeds.

Tool Distribution. **800 people** from 10 villages received an agricultural kit composed of: 3 daba, 3 picks, and 3 rakes (2400 of each tool total; 7200 tools total). Kit composition was based on surveys of community leaders, villagers, and regional crisis responders

Activity 3.2: Training in Seed and Fertilizer Use.

Along with the distribution of inputs (Activity 3.1), the project initiated training sessions for producers in six villages (Korientzé, Bagui, Mougui, Hororo, Falembougou and Koundioum) on the seed varieties distributed and the optimization of fertilizer use on crops. Training sessions benefitted **782 persons (194 women)**.



Shallot fields in Mbessena/Korombana.

Activity 3.3 Support improved seed handling and storage to ensure productive seeds.

The RECAPE project team worked with communities to test the quality and germination rate of seed varieties, both ensuring the quality of seed and introducing leaders to methods for appropriate testing.

Activity 3.4 Rehabilitate market gardens.

The RECAPE project worked with **14 women's** market gardens (16 total ha) to repair critical agricultural infrastructure damaged during the crisis, and distributed emergency seed through a voucher program to offset the gap in local supply. Through this support, women were able to immediately resume production for household consumption and sale in local markets. Following market garden rehabilitation, women harvested an

average of **7,870 tons** of shallots (roughly 196.75 kg per woman) and **5,650 tons** of potatoes (roughly 141.25 kg per woman), covering consumption needs of the **3,143 beneficiaries** for at least 10 months. One-half to two-thirds of shallot and potatoes harvest are sold in markets; women use revenues from the sale of products for household expenditures, including healthcare and their children's education.



Harvest of shallot in Tiécouraré.



Shallot harvested.



Potatoes harvested in Korientzé.

Sub-Sector 1.4: Irrigation

Activity 4.1: Rehabilitate/Construct Irrigated and Rain-fed Rice Fields

The RECAPE team selected local contractors specializing in irrigation development and public works to rehabilitate **102 ha** of irrigated and rain-fed rice fields: the Falembougou rice field (32 hectares) in Dangol-Boré, the Mougouï rice plain in Koubewel Koundia (30 ha), and the Koundioum rice plain (40 hectares). These projects benefitted **1,063 people (378 women)**. NEF also provided technical assistance to rice farmers to make best use of water management infrastructure to maximize production of rice for consumption and sale in local markets beginning this year.



Koundioum rehabilitation work in progress (left) and completed (right).

Activity 4.2 Introduce efficient technologies to increase production.

In coordination with seed vouchers and fertilizer distribution and with support of farmers' associations' leaders, the project team provided technical assistance to rice farmers to make best use of water management infrastructure to maximize production of rice for consumption and sale in local markets. NEF provided targeted training to strengthen the capacity of farmers and their resilience against future crises through seed selection, water management, and cropping patterns.

Sub-Sector 2.1: Livelihoods Restoration

Activity 5.1. Select beneficiaries.

Working in close cooperation with local authorities, NEF was able to identify **7,314 individuals** in the 8 targeted communities who were eligible to receive cash grants; **1,900 beneficiaries (1,400 women)** were selected from this list of candidates.

Activity 5.2 Provide cash grants to restart income-generating activities.

Following the selection of cash grant beneficiaries (Activity 5.1), the project team distributed a total of **95 million FCFA (~US\$190,000)** in cash grants to **1,900 beneficiaries (1,400 women)**. Activities undertaken with grants varied by site, but cattle and sheep fattening activities predominated. The main activities undertaken in each commune were:

- **Haire:** sheep fattening, grain (millet), seasoning (spices), food (cake, peanuts, dairy products)
- **Douentza:** sheep fattening, condiments (vegetables, spices and other products), food (peanuts, dairy products, beverages made with local products, flat cakes), general trade
- **Djaptodji:** cattle trade, fattening, condiments, food, fish

- **Konna:** selling fresh / smoked fish, cereals, sheep fattening, condiments, general trade
- **Korombana:** fish, cereals, fattening cattle trade, condiments (vegetables, spices and other products)
- **Ouroube Dounde:** fish, fattening cattle trade, condiments (vegetables, spices and other products), food (flat cakes, peanut)
- **Tedje:** trade in various items: sugar, tea, cereals, condiments, fattening

The trade of food and fish is mostly done by women. Both men and women undertook animal activities, but men tended to undertake activities on a larger scale.

Activity 5.3 Build capacity for successful livelihoods restoration.

Economic recovery agents provided guidance to grantees in designing (or redesigning) income-generating activities for rapid recovery. Recent follow-up meetings with individuals who received grants indicate that **84.6%** of beneficiaries were able to restart their microenterprises. Project beneficiaries reported improved living conditions and financial autonomy, as well as increases in working capital and economic activity. Local micro-finance institutions have begun to lend again, suggesting beneficiaries are sufficiently confident in the stability of the business climate to take out debt.

4. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

The sudden failure of the rains in September 2013 was the main difficulty encountered over the course of project implementation. Meteorological data for the 2013/2014 crop season indicates that the annual rains began late and ended early. On average, precipitation levels across the region were significantly lower and more erratic this year (439 mm in 31 days) than last year (625 mm in 37 days). The lack of rainfall for over 30 days did not allow normal growth of millet and rain-fed rice, leading to sub-average to average harvest yields in all 15 targeted communes.

The RECAPE team had some difficulty accessing project sites due to annual flooding, which delayed the delivery of equipment and production materials to be used in reconstruction projects. These delays did affect overall project impact.

The situation in the targeted regions continues to be challenging, with large numbers of returnees facing difficulties in reintegrating due to the degradation, loss, and/or deteriorations of their means of production. Ongoing support is required in the region to address these vulnerabilities, and ensure the continued recovery of economic activity promoted through the project.

5. RESULTS ASSESSMENT AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Through an evaluation of outcomes, the assessment team analyzed the extent to which the RECAPE project met its stated goals and objectives. On a continuous basis, the project team worked to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and relevance of the project to document lessons in order to improve actions, planning, and decision-making.

Targeted interventions in hard-hit communities provided **19,069 individuals (9,376 women)** with the tools and support needed to rebuild their livelihoods, and generate income needed to meet families' food, education, and healthcare needs.

The RECAPE project team met or exceeded 8 out of 13 project indicators. Shortcomings in agricultural production can be attributed to the sudden failure of the rains in September; the region received 30% less rainfall than in the previous season.

Despite low rainfall reducing the production of millet, rice production was high and is expected to cover on average six months of beneficiaries' grain needs. Vegetable production at market gardens had incredible results, with 7.8 tons of shallot and 5.8 tons of potato produced per hectare – providing an estimated income of 112,655 CFA (\$231.80 USD) per participating woman. Support in agricultural production prevented greater food-security concerns in areas benefiting from project activities, even during a drier agricultural season that threatened crop production.

Fisheries production was also lower than anticipated. The 5 rehabilitated ponds lacked adequate nutrition for the fish, preventing stock levels from rising as rapidly as had initially been predicted. NEF has continued to work with targeted fishers and communities to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to improve production through the use of appropriate techniques. With the use of improved techniques, production is expected to reach (or exceed) targets in the future.

Funding for the recovery of income generating activities was the first of its kind during the post-crisis period, and was viewed particularly positively by recipients. All recipients interviewed during the evaluation expressed great satisfaction with the timeliness, support, and importance of this initiative. Beneficiaries worked in a variety of economic areas, including cattle trade, animal fattening, artisanal crafts, food production, and spice trade. Women, who comprised 75% of small grant beneficiaries, particularly benefited in re-launching their economic activities. The project team noted positive signs of economic recovery in local markets following project activities, including greater crowds in livestock markets, the presence of sheep and goats for sale, and market attendance by women.

6. COST EFFECTIVENESS

The RECAPE project team carefully managed costs and expenditures to ensure the effectiveness of spending and quality of program implementation. Suppliers were carefully compared and reviewed to ensure that they provided quality materials/services at appropriate costs.

The voucher system allowed participants to have flexibility to purchase tools that they needed for their specific purposes. It also enabled individuals to purchase varieties appropriate to local conditions, experience, and tastes—and to establish relationships with suppliers. Further, the voucher system also generated income for local and regional vendors. Compared with the direct distribution of materials usually done through municipal or village authorities, NEF found that the voucher system greatly minimized risks, including the stealing/appropriation of stock, the resale of goods, or improper distribution. While significant effort was required in identifying/selecting beneficiaries and vetting suppliers, overall the project team found that this system improved cost effectiveness.

7. OVERVIEW/IMPACT OF SECURITY SITUATION

The security situation generally improved in the areas targeted by RECAPE over the course of program implementation. The redeployment of the Malian army, the return of public administrators, and the deployment of a Togolese MINUSMA contingent to Douentza region aided in the effective implementation of project activities in all targeted communes, except Bambara Maoudé in the Timbuktu region where the prolonged absence of authorities (especially the police). Project staff took additional precautions when transporting money within and between Douentza and Bambara. For instance, beneficiaries were paid at a different location every day as a precaution against looting.

ATTACHMENT: SUCCESS STORIES

RESTORING ECONOMIC CAPACITY IN NORTHERN MALI Project Restores Hope to Devastated Communities



A father of 4, Kaadi Tangara works hard to grow millet on the hills outside his home in the village of Bagui, Mali, in the commune of Korombana

Bagui, MALI – Putting food on the table had never been an easy task for Kaadi Tangara. Lacking irrigation and with poor rainfall, Kaadi's production seldom was greater than one ton.

"Most years, low rainfall meant I could only harvest 2 to 3 months worth of grain for my family," Kaadi said. "It was not enough. To make up the difference, I had to sell our animals just to put food on the table or find temporary work in Bamako or Mopti."

With the installation of an irrigation system in 2005, farmers like Kaadi were able to make the most out of what little water was available, allowing them to stagger crop irrigation and ultimately increase their yields. From 2007 to 2012, the Tangura family produced enough food to meet its own needs and beyond. Kaadi was able meet all of his household needs and even sell rice at the market. He recouped the animals and equipment

he had sold during leaner times.

"We were not rich, but we had everything we needed to improve our conditions," Kaadi said.

When political crisis struck Mali in 2012, rebels in the north roamed from town to town in search of homes and businesses to loot, vandalizing infrastructure in towns like Bagui. The irrigated perimeter in Bagui was destroyed.

"After so many successful years, we lost everything," Kaadi said. "I was so discouraged ... I considered uprooting my family and moving somewhere safer to start all over again."

Then, through the support of the United States Agency for International Development/Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance

(USAID/OFDA), the Near East Foundation began implementing the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project. The project addresses the immediate recovery needs of people in northern Mali to restore livelihoods and food security.

The project distributed vouchers for food aid, fertilizers, and seeds to hundreds of households like the Tangura's and worked with local leaders to repair vandalized infrastructure.

Agricultural activity has resumed, and the local economy is slowly coming back to life. Along with others in his community, Kaadi and his family have begun to recover.

"It is often said that where there is life, there is hope," Kaadi said. "Thanks to the RECAPE project, I can personally attest that this saying is true. Thank you to all who have contributed to my village's rebirth and helped us to preserve our dignity. There is so much potential here, in the land and in the water."

The RECAPE project has restored 5 fishing ponds, provided supplemental feed for more than 100,000 livestock, distributed 7,800 vouchers for seed and fertilizers, restored irrigation on more than 100 hectares (benefiting more than 1,000 people), and distributed \$190,000 in livelihood grants to 1,900 individuals.



Near East Foundation
230 Euclid Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
T: 315.428.8670

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RESTORING ECONOMIC CAPACITY IN NORTHERN MALI

Feed Supplements Preserve Pastoralists' Investments



Pastoralists like Samba Allaye Dicko (above) were drastically affected by the takeover of Northern Mali by armed rebel groups in 2012.

MALI - A USAID/OFDA-funded early recovery effort provided emergency support to the local livestock sector. Supplemental feeding activities for livestock, the rehabilitation of 5 pastoral water points, and the restoration of 100 hectares of pasture provided emergency support benefiting more than 100,000 animals and 5,600 people (more than 40 percent women).

Samba Allaye Dicko—a 46-year-old father of 8 from N'Gouma, Mali depends on annual rains to stock pastures with the grasses he needs to feed his herd.

In better years, Samba and other pastoralists would travel north in search of verdant pastures and divide rangeland to avoid overgrazing. When political crisis struck Mali in 2012, insecurity on the roads meant he had to graze his 190 cattle on the outer limits of his village. Weak rains meant that there was little feed to share.

"There were too many of us grazing our cattle in one area,

so we quickly ran out of food," Samba said. "In the first months of the crisis, I lost nearly half my herd and with it, half my wealth."

To make matters worse, security concerns forced shopkeepers to raise the price of animal feed and other goods to cover increased transportation costs and lapses in supply.

With support from the United States Agency for International Development/Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the Near East Foundation began implementing the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations

Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project. The project addressed the immediate recovery needs of people in northern Mali to restore livelihoods and food security—including those of pastoralists.

The project intervened to mitigate the livestock food shortage, distributing feed supplements to hard-pressed pastoralists who could not afford to pay inflated prices at the local shops.

"We never imagined that we would ever receive the level of support the RECAPE project provided at a time when so many of us were struggling," Samba said. "Their assistance carried my herd and my colleagues' herds through the lean season. Without it, more than half of my investments would have been wiped out."

NEF also rehabilitated 5 watering points that fell into disrepair at the height of the crisis.

"I know I speak for others in my community when I say RECAPE helped us to stay afloat at a difficult time," Samba said. "Our livelihoods and our families are more secure and we could not be more thankful."

The project helped more than 5,600 people who depend on pastoral activities to recover by ensuring improved food security and livelihoods.

USAID administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.



Near East Foundation
230 Euclid Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
T: 315.428.8670

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RESTORING ECONOMIC CAPACITY IN NORTHERN MALI

Cash Grants Offer a Second Chance



Sanata Magnata left her village in Northern Mali in 2012 because of political instability. She was forced to leave all her valuable business assets behind to save her family.

Bagui, MALI – Sanata Magnata is a 43-year-old commercial saleswoman from Bagui. For 15 years, Sanata traded smoked fish and root vegetables to feed her family. As a widower, she depended upon income from her small business to educate, clothe, and feed her children.

When political crisis struck Mali in 2012, Sanata's family—like many in the region—was forced to flee the violence, leaving valuable assets behind.

"The crisis changed my life," Sanata said. "Everything I had built collapsed around me like a house of cards."

Sanata left her village, leaving all her belongings behind, out of fear that jihadist groups would enlist her children. When she returned 18 months later, her house was in ruins and rebels had taken most of her business supplies.

"I needed funding to rebuild my business, but local agencies were

not loaning," Sanata said.

Too many clients had defaulted due to the crisis, and local funds needed to recapitalize before issuing more loans. Out of work and homeless, Sanata fell back upon the generosity of her family and neighbors to keep her children alive.

Then, with support from the United States Agency for International Development/Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the Near East Foundation began implementing the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project to address the immediate

recovery needs of people in northern Mali to restore livelihoods and food security.

Through the project, Sanata received a cash grant. She reconnected with her network of suppliers and distributors, replaced capital stolen in her absence, rebuilt her house using mud bricks in place of straw, and even purchased a canoe to increase her fishing activity. Today, her catch has recovered to pre-crisis levels, and she has enough money to pay for food and send her children to school.

"When I first heard that grants were available, I did not believe it," Sanata said. "But when I received my voucher and learned where and how to claim my grant, I began to cry, knowing that someone thought of my suffering and answered my prayers for help. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Cash grants have helped 1,900 people to begin to reestablish livelihoods activities after liberation from the takeover by armed rebel groups in 2012. Near East Foundation economic recovery agents provided guidance to grantees in designing (or redesigning) income-generating activities for rapid recovery. Project beneficiaries reported improved living conditions and financial autonomy, as well as increased working capital and economic activity.

USAID administers the U.S. foreign assistance program, providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.



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